

## **2008 Partners Meeting (Partners V), August 6-8, 2008**

USDA will convene the 2008 Partners Meeting (Partners V) on August 6-8, 2008 at the Doubletree Hotel Crystal City, located at 300 Army Navy Drive in Arlington, Virginia. The conference theme is "Building Bridges, Building Hope: Working Together to Strengthen Farming and Rural Communities." The meeting opens at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 6 with the keynote address presented by The Honorable Ed Schaefer, Secretary of Agriculture. Click here for [a full agenda of the events of April 6](#).

The 2008 Partners Meeting serves as a "call to action" for leaders of community based organizations to work with USDA Agency Heads to think through solutions to problems that impact the farm business enterprise capacity of small, minority and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers so USDA might better address their needs.

The USDA Partners Meetings have become known for its "conversations" sessions wherein participants engage in honest and frank dialogue about farm policies and practices. Partners V will continue the conversations model. The 2008 conversations will focus on sections of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the Farm Bill) that most impact the well-being of small, beginning, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, minority and underserved producers. Among the conversation topics are conservation, alternative energy, small and beginning farmers and ranchers, specialty crops, county committees, and foreclosures. The three training sessions will focus on grantsmanship, microenterprise and individual development accounts, and good handling practices and good agricultural practices.

Over the years the attendance has increased from approximately 45 at the first stakeholders meeting to nearly 500 at the 2007 meeting. Participation by representatives of community based organizations has increased from 20 to 203 during this period. More than 500 representatives of community based organizations, minority-serving institutions and foundations, other Federal agencies, and congressional staff are expected to participate in this year's meeting.

For more information on the 2008 Partners Meeting (Partners V) contact the Office of Outreach at:

Telephone: (202) 720-6350

Toll Free Number: (800) 880-4143

E-Mail Address: [usdaoutreach@usda.gov](mailto:usdaoutreach@usda.gov)